

"Black Parties"  
9/10/68

CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN AMERICA

Reprinted with permission from a statement by the Asian-American Political Alliance.

On May 6, 1968 Edwin E. Willis, D-La., Chairman of HUAC, issued a 65-page report entitled Guerrilla Warfare Advocates in the United States which caused a good deal of controversy. The Washington Post of the same day carried an article about it under the caption "HUAC Would Intern Negro 'Guerrilla'." Locally the San Francisco Chronicle, also on the same day, carried a similar article under the caption "Probers Suggest Detention Camps." The press release of the report itself stated "that mixed Communist and Black nationalist elements are today planning and organizing paramilitary operations and that it is their intent to instigate additional riots which will pave the way for a general revolutionary uprising fought along guerrilla warfare lines." The avowed aim of this 65-page report was to alert and inform Congress and the American people of this imminent danger to national security.

Willis himself, in the foreword to the report, states that "it is my personal view that if the United States did not face an international Communist threat with the ever-present possibility of its being militarily engaged in other parts of the world, guerrilla warfare advocates would pose little danger to our country." Having said this he continues, "Should our military forces, in substantial numbers, be committed to actual combat in a number of other areas of the world, however, suppression of guerrilla warfare operations which were launched simultaneously in a number of major cities could pose a most serious problem." And because there is this possibility, according to the report, "acts of overt violence by the guerrillas would mean that they had declared a 'state of war' within the country and, therefore, would forfeit their rights as in wartime."

The most crucial features of this 65-page report lie in its recommendation for the usage of "detention centers" and the issuance of "census cards." In case of a national emergency, presumably when guerrilla violence has reached uncontrollable proportions, the report states: "The McCarran Act provides for various detention centers to be operated throughout the country and these might well be utilized for the temporary imprisonment of warring guerrillas."

The McCarran Act (also known as the Internal Security Act) of 1950, as amended, actually does have provisions to detain people under Title II which is called "Emergency Detention." Under this Title (Sec. 102 (a)) a state of "Internal Security Emergency" can be declared by the President in the event of any one of the following: 1) invasion of the territory of the United States or its possession;

2) declaration of war by Congress; or 3) insurrection within the United States in aid of a foreign enemy. The report of the HUAC, in asserting that this Act provides for detention centers, of course has the third and last emergency in mind.

Title II (Sec. 103 (a)) further goes on: "whenever there shall be in existence such an emergency the President, acting through the Attorney General, is hereby authorized to apprehend and by order detain, pursuant to the provisions of this title, each person as to whom there is reasonable ground to believe that such person probably will engage in, or probably will conspire with others to engage in, acts of espionage or of sabotage." (Italics: Editors'). Upon 48 hours after arrest procedures are established in this Title whereby a person is granted the right to a preliminary hearing. But the procedures themselves are in clear violation of due "due process" because the arrested person "may introduce evidence in his own behalf, and may cross-examine witnesses against him, except that the Attorney General or his representative shall not be required to furnish information the revelation of which would disclose the identity or evidence of Government agents or officers which he believes would be dangerous to national safety and security to divulge." And so "if from the evidence it appears to the preliminary hearing officer that there is probable cause for the detention of such person pursuant to this title, such hearing officer shall forthwith issue an order for the detention of such person...."

The other crucial feature of the HUAC report is the recommendation for so-called "census cards." Such a card would bear the photograph of each person in the ghetto, his address, and other data about his home city. (Italics: Editors'). The purpose of these cards is to classify people, thereby facilitating the survey and control of their movement from one place to another in times of "emergency". In the words of the report itself: "This classification would aid the authorities in knowing the exact location of any suspect and who is in control of any given district." Again: "Under such a system, movement would be proscribed and the ability of the guerrilla to move freely from place to place seriously curtailed."

After the press release of this 65-page report was issued, the fears of detention centers were heightened, and understandably the report received considerable public attention. Prior to May 6, 1968 Attorney General Ramsey Clark, on NBC's "Meet the Press" on April 7, 1968, is reported to have denied the existence of concentration camps, for rumors of one kind or another about them were widespread even before this report was issued. "Rumors, and fear that arises from rumors," he stated, "are a great threat to us. Fear itself is a great threat and people who spread false rumors about concentration camps are either ignorant of the facts or have a motive of dividing this country." Later on

**WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY  
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION**

Presidio of San Francisco, California  
April 24, 1942

**INSTRUCTIONS  
TO ALL PERSONS OF  
JAPANESE  
ANCESTRY**

**Living in the Following Area:**

All of those portions of the Counties of Contra Costa and Alameda, State of California, within the boundary beginning at Carquinez Strait; thence southerly on U. S. Highway No. 40 to its intersection with California State Highway No. 4, at or near Hercules; thence easterly on said Highway No. 4 to its intersection with California State Highway No. 21; thence southerly on said Highway No. 21 to its intersection with California State Highway No. 24, at Walnut Creek; thence westerly on said Highway No. 24 to the southerly limits of the City of Berkeley; thence following the said southerly city limits to San Francisco Bay; thence northerly and following the shore line of San Francisco Bay, through San Pablo Strait, and San Pablo Bay, to the point of beginning.

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 19, this Headquarters, dated April 24, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Friday, May 1, 1942.

No Japanese person living in the above area will be permitted to change residence after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Friday, April 24, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Northern California Sector, at the Civil Control Station located at:

2345 Channing Way, Berkeley, California.

Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of uniting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency.

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

**The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:**

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Saturday, April 25, 1942, or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Sunday, April 26, 1942.

2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:
  - (a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;
  - (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;
  - (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;
  - (d) Sufficient knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls and cups for each member of the family;
  - (e) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

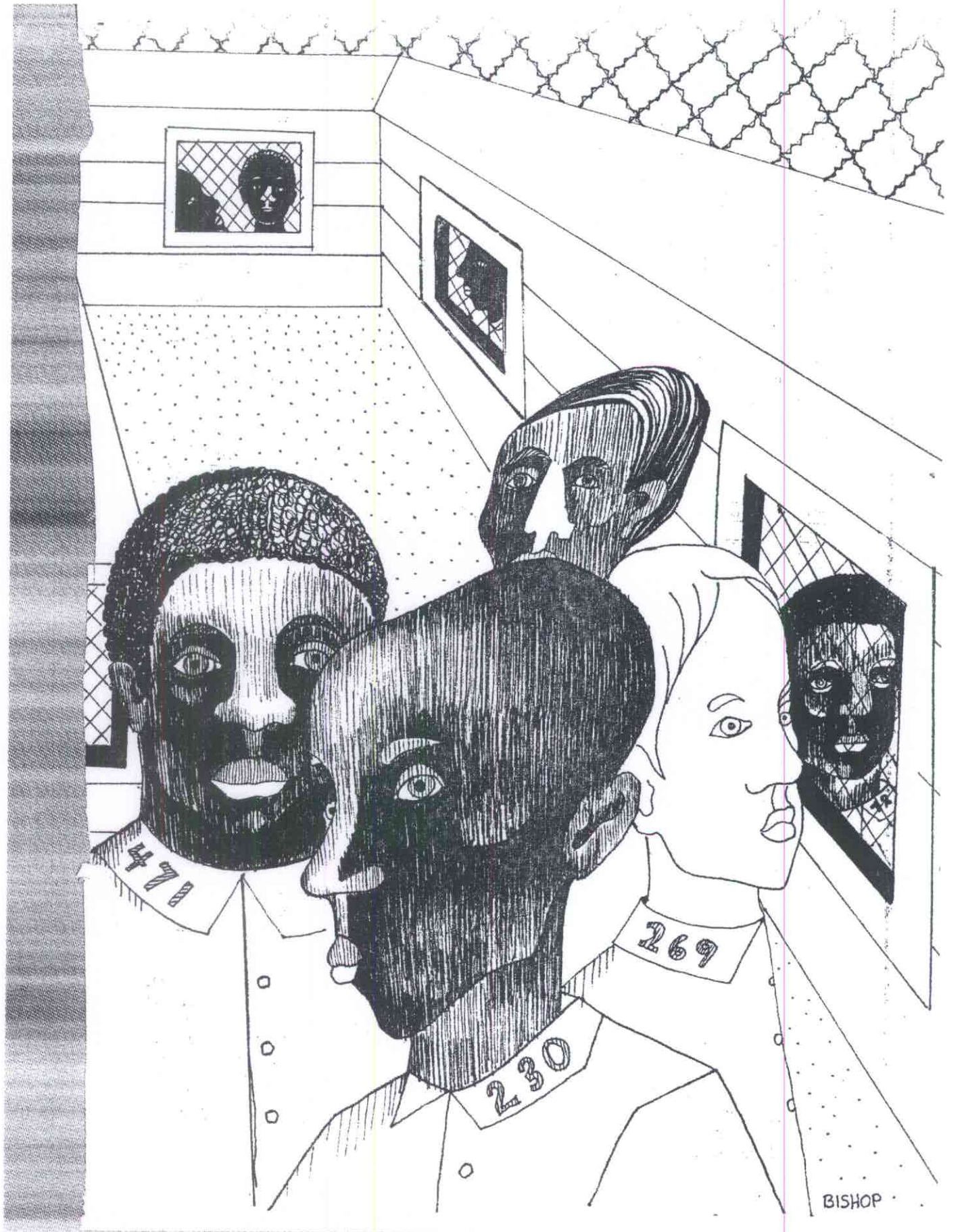
All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions obtained at the Civil Control Station.

The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.
4. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage at the sole risk of the owner of the more substantial household items, such as iceboxes, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.
5. Each family, and individual living alone, will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center or will be authorized to travel by private automobile in a supervised group. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station.

**Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Saturday, April 25, 1942, or between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Sunday, April 26, 1942, to receive further instructions.**

J. L. DeWITT  
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army  
Commanding



BISHOP

May 12, 1968, after the issuance of the report, on ABC's "Issues and Answers," he repeated his view: "There are no concentration camps in this country. There are no plans to prepare any concentration camps in this country. No concentration camps are needed in this country. We have not had a situation in all of the difficulties that we have faced from the standpoint of riots and disturbances throughout our history, which has indicated a need for any mass detention facilities for American citizens, and I see no such need now."

J. Walter Yeagley, Assistant Attorney General, who heads the Internal Security Division of the Department of Justice and who hence would be directly responsible for administering Title II, has echoed Attorney General Ramsey Clark's statements. He has categorically denied the existence of any concentration camps as well as any government intent to detain any one under the provisions of Title II. He has admitted, however, that six detention facilities were maintained up until around 1957 in accordance with its provisions. These six facilities were as follows: Tule Lake, California; Wickenburg and Florence, Arizona; El Reno, Oklahoma; Allenwood, Pennsylvania; and Avon Park, Florida. (Italics: Editors'). Though these facilities were maintained up to about 1957, according to Yeagley, they were never used to detain any one under Title II and have been abandoned since. He cites two basic reasons why the McCarran Act can not be invoked. First, "the act requires that each 'detained' person be arrested on a warrant specifying his name and stating the Government's belief that he may engage or conspire to engage in sabotage or espionage." Second, "even if the rioting were formally declared an 'insurrection', there is no evidence to date that it is or may be fomented 'in aid of a foreign enemy' as required before Title II could be applied." Concluding, Yeagley stated: "I know of no contingency plan for mass Federal detention of Negroes under Title II or any other statute."

So much for Willis' HUAC report and the government response to it. It is true that the government under the provisions of Title II is required to name each person to be arrested and ultimately detained. But this requirement by no means would hinder the government from taking action, for we would be naive not to believe that the government does not have a list of militants, black and white, as well as of others who have dissented strongly against the Viet Nam war and racism. In addition, even though the government has to state its belief that the arrested person is engaging in or conspires to engage in acts of sabotage or espionage, as we have clearly seen, it is under no final obligation to produce the source of its evidence for its belief. For the provisions of Title II in fact places the burden of innocence upon the suspected person, judging him as guilty unless he himself can prove otherwise, with the government itself under the obligation of stating only its probable belief and no more.

That there are no detention camps at present, as the Attorney General's office states, is beside the point. The important point is that the McCarran Act provides for detention camps and that, if arrests are made under its Title II provisions, then they could be built with relative ease. The definition as to when there is a state of emergency, particularly the third and last one which states in the event of "insurrection in the United States in aid of a foreign enemy," thus becomes of paramount importance. How is "in aid of a foreign enemy" to be interpreted? The HUAC report mentions groups such as the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and the Progressive Labor Party and such individuals as Stokely Carmichael and Thomas Hayden. Now, depending upon the interpretation, any number of other groups and individuals besides these specifically mentioned could be included. Does it include the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense here in Oakland which has become affiliated with SNCC, and hence with Stokely Carmichael? In this connection it should be remembered that even Reverend Abernathy has been accused of being a Communist and that Japanese-Americans were alleged to be aiding a foreign enemy which allegation became one of the ostensible reasons for their "evacuation."

Thus the key issue is not whether or not Title II of the McCarran Act can be invoked or not. It is rather the very existence of the Act itself which provides for detention camps and which therefore permits some one like Willis to suggest their usage. Some say that the McCarran Act is a product of the McCarthy era, dismissing it at that. We of the Asian-American Political Alliance feel, as long as it is in effect, that it can be, and for that matter will be, and is being invoked against Black militants as well as white radicals. Moreover, given the current assumptions of American foreign policy, we see the clear possibility of a major war with Communist China; and if such should come to pass, then we do not proclude the possibility of Chinese-Americans being placed into detention camps in the same way Japanese-Americans were during World II. And so we of the Asian-American Political Alliance demand that all politicians take an unequivocal stand on this issue. Are they in favor for the repeal of the McCarran Act or not? Rumors about detention camps will not disappear by simply stating arguments that it will not or can not be invoked. Instead they will increase; especially when one considers that a new Internal Security Act of 1968 is now being proposed which will in effect make acts of dissent equivalent to treason (See S. 2988, introduced by Senator Eastland of Mississippi on February 19, 1968). Only with its actual repeal will the legal justifications for political prisoners crumble, and the Asian-American Political Alliance demands that it be.

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